

Nor is he disappointed when the Sins duly
 appear, dilate
 on their own extreme wickedness, and
 depart; *O, this
 feeds my soul', is his reply, when Lucifer
 politely en-
 quires how he has enjoyed it all. And we are
 left marvel-
 ling at our forefathers' idea of a really
 entertaining evening.
 It would be priggish to pretend that the
 Seven Deadly
 Sins have lost all appeal for us; but we like
 them a little
 better disguised, and in a subtler fancy-
 dress. The Middle
 Ages, however, nourished a disinterested
 affection for
 the Devil which our cold hearts cannot
 understand. For
 the same reason in the Morality Play it is
 the supreme
 moment when the devil Tityvillus is ramping
 and roaring
 behind the scenes on the brink of entry, that
 is chosen for
 sending the hat round. Out with your
 sixpences, *yf ye
 wyll se hys abhomynabull presens'! Who
 could think of
 economy at such a rime?

Our author is no exception. He trots in
 the sacred
 Seven five rimes in all; but it is the scene of
 their repent-
 ance that provides one of the most
 redeeming features of
 his whole pious but protracted work. Here
 he becomes
 for the modern reader not merely, as in
 many of the
 passages above, a curious relic of our past,
 but an artist
 of the grotesque not unworthy of
 comparison with
 Swift, Hogarth, and Dickens. Dunbar's
 Deadly Sins
 merely dance a wild Highland fling;
 Marlowe's are curt
 and stiff as an Elizabethan woodcut;
 Spenser's provide a

rich fantastic pageant like an Italian fresco;
but these, by
confessing what they have done, instead of
being simply
word-painted externally, thereby start with
the definite
advantage, from a literary point of view, of
having a
past, as well as being present, and existing
in time as well
as space. Thus they anticipate the
seventeenth-century
Character. There is even something of the
full-grown
novelist's quality about several of them—
Envy going to